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primarily a cookery book, but historically it marks the development from an earlier piecemeal approach to domestic work towards a systematic elaboration of the rules and routines which governed the daily lives of middle-class women.

The new type of domestic manual became necessary because of the changes in women's domestic lives. The effects of industrialisation, the growth of the cities, colonialism and a changing class structure meant that women of all classes were presented with new definitions of their roles, and the material conditions of their lives differed considerably from those of their grandmothers. The pattern of female employment was steadily changing:

Over the period from 1841 to 1914 the greatest change in women's occupations was the rising incidence of housewifery as the sole occupation for married women. In 1851, one in four married women (with husbands alive) was employed. By 1911, the figure was one in ten.²

Compared with her mother or grandmother, an individual woman in nineteenth-century Britain was more likely to live in a town or city, associating with a larger number of people whom she did not know well. She would own (or more accurately, as married women only acquired property rights in 1882, her husband would own) more manufactured goods and have a wider choice of furnishings, kitchen equipment, styles of furniture, clothing and foodstuffs, which would include imports from the colonies. Her surroundings would be dirtier, mainly from the use of coal as fuel resulting in a fall-out of soot indoors and a deadlier form of pollution outdoors, the notorious smogs of the cities. The high infant mortality rate did not fall until the end of the century; there were recurrent epidemics of cholera, typhoid and other contagious diseases.

The considerable work involved in maintaining those standards of comfort, cleanliness and behaviour which signified middle-class respectability fell almost entirely upon women, both as mistresses of households and as domestic servants. To compound their difficulties, the work had to be performed as unobtrusively as possible since according to the ideology of womanhood, hearth and home, a man's home was supposed to be a refuge from work, not a workplace.³ Husbands, fathers and employers expected to find the home a tranquil haven undisturbed by signs of domestic toil, so household work had to be kept invisible – in some cases servants were even warned that they were never to be seen.⁴ Architects designed houses with separate stairs, sleeping quarters for domestic staff in the attics and basement kitchens so that the invisible servant could be a reality. Servants wore decorative uniforms when they were on view to conceal their true functions. The most important strategy offered to women in the cause of concealing housework was an idea, which has outlasted the age of servants: the domestic routine. Routines kept the household running efficiently by strict timetabling which preserved the peace of the head of the family. Any woman who could afford the price of a book was offered the chance to buy domestic harmony through the ready-made household routine.

The author of *Advice to a young married woman* ([1887]) put the matter quite bluntly in a chapter on 'the management of a husband':

A man likes his meals, after a hard day's toil, nicely cooked and placed before him in a dainty manner – with snow-white table cloth, bright cutlery and clean dishes. He is

entitled to this service. If the meal and its surroundings are tempting he will linger over it and enjoy it, discussing the news of the day in a pleasant way with his wife. He becomes proud of his home, and begins to realise that she is the chief source of his pride.

But the man who comes from a hard day's toil to a place of squalor, received by a slatternly wife with unkempt hair, untidy dress, dirty face and hands, and words of complaint about some trivial matter with which he has really nothing to do, swallows his ill-prepared, ill-served meal, and immediately turns his thoughts towards the tavern – the only place where he can obtain the repose and the congenial society which he seeks.

It is worth noting the author's insistence that domestic difficulties are 'really nothing to do' with the husband, and also the way in which the wife's work is both supposed to be invisible and is treated as if it does not exist – a twofold vanishing act. While she is exhorted to suppress all signs of her labour – dirt, any mention of her problems – only her husband is described as having performed 'a hard day's toil', although in some households the man's work would involve less manual labour than the woman's.

It is hard to overestimate the role of the household book in promoting the ideal pattern of middle-class domestic life. Women bought books in their millions seeking advice on household routines, managing servants, provisioning, decorating and furnishing their homes, marketing, planning menus and cooking, bringing up children, home nursing, entertaining and correct social behaviour. Women of all classes bought magazines as they still do a century later, but it is remarkable that compared with their importance to the publishing trade a hundred years ago household books scarcely exist now as a separate field. Cookery books and childcare manuals are as popular as ever but the market for the general household book all but vanished once middle-class women were able to find work outside their homes.

The four sections of the bibliography correspond to the major groups of household books, Domestic economy, Servants, Domestic medicine and childcare, and Etiquette. The largest category, Domestic economy, groups together general works whose topics include choosing and furnishing a home, cleaning and maintaining the home and its contents, keeping household accounts, laundrywork, the preparation and use of medicines and household provisions, the care and management of children, the duties and management of servants, household routines, entertaining and etiquette. A single work might cover all or a selection of these and might also include sections on cookery comprising up to one third of the book's entire contents. Many of the books in the Servants section cover the same subjects but are addressed specifically to servants, while others are particularly concerned with relations between servant and employer or the conditions of domestic service. Domestic medicine and Childcare are grouped together because the contents of the books overlap considerably. The Etiquette section includes books on entertaining, the rules of hospitality and general rules of social behaviour.

I have excluded a large number of books which could be classed as domestic literature but offered little or no practical advice, or else were too technical to have been written for the lay reader. Among the books which will not be found in the bibliography are books on housebuilding, architectural planning, hygiene and

sanitation, commercial laundry manuals, collections of manufacturing and commercial receipts and textbooks for the medical and legal professions. I have not included religious tracts or general encyclopaedias and dictionaries.

Many books in the Domestic economy section contain material on needlework, dressmaking, gardening, husbandry, recreations and pastimes. In order to keep the definition of household books within reasonable bounds I have not included any specialised books on these subjects, which could be seen as optional additions to the essential activities of the home and in any event constitute large enough fields for research in their own right. It follows that only books on indoor domestic service will be found in the Servants section, not books which refer primarily to outdoor work or the duties of outdoor servants such as bailiffs or gardeners.

Cookery books, defined as books more than a third of whose contents relate to cookery, are not included and the reader should refer instead to the separate bibliographies of cookery books. Books on dining out, diet, nutrition, brewing and winemaking are also excluded, although these topics may appear in some general books on Domestic medicine and Domestic economy.

The subject index refers the reader to specific topics which are more narrowly defined than above, and also to different genres. Household books, far from being all of one type, came as compendiums, miscellanies, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, school textbooks, narratives, collections of receipts, anecdotes or letters, as well as in the traditional form of an advice book. Some were offshoots of magazines, some were brought out by publishers who clearly intended capturing one particular section of a lucrative market, while others simply followed on from older forms. The following notes to the four sections of the bibliography provide a more detailed account of its scope and offer a brief sketch of the genres.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY

Receipt books

Before 1800 the typical domestic economy manual was little more than a collection of receipts, sometimes coupled with exhortations to the housewife as much spiritual as practical. Most of the survivals of this genre can properly be classed as straightforward cookery books, and so relatively few appear here. The remaining domestic receipt books dealt with a wide range of subjects: Colin MacKenzie's *Five thousand receipts in all the useful and domestic arts* (1823) was arranged in twenty-two sections covering metallurgy, varnishes, oil and water colours, enamelling, engraving, dyeing, bleaching, cements, brewing, wines, distillation, cookery, perfumery, inks, medicine, farriery, horticulture, husbandry, rural and domestic economy, pottery, glass and miscellaneous. There were undoubtedly a number of smaller collections of receipts in common use which were cheaper and flimsier publications, and the existing copies I have been able to trace must represent only a fragment of these (James Laughton published over a hundred editions of his sixpenny pamphlet between 1830 and 1850, but only a handful appear in the bibliography). Most probably wore out through use or were thrown away, their owners not considering them worth preserving.

Some early examples of receipt books after 1800 follow a dilettante gentlemanly tradition, appealing to amateur pharmacists and experimental chemists. Unlike the great majority of domestic economy books which were written at the same time expressly for women, these compilations are addressed to their authors' fellow enthusiasts, who like them had time and money enough to amuse themselves with home-made concoctions and little experiments. The title of John Badcock's book ([1823]) promises entertainment at least as much as practical information:

Domestic amusements, or philosophical recreations, containing the results of various experiments in practical science and the useful arts, applicable to the business of real life, to curious research and elegant recreation. Including numerous useful tests of adulterations in the materials that conduce to health; and an account of new and important discoveries in natural philosophy . . .

In 1810 William Pybus published *A manual of useful knowledge, being a collection of valuable miscellaneous receipts and philosophical experiments, selected from various authors*. He dedicated his book to 'the society instituted in London for the encouragement of arts, manufactures, and commerce', explaining that the society's design was to promote the practical knowledge and application of scientific principles amongst all classes of the community. Pybus' book hardly matches up to these serious intentions – the overall effect is of a schoolboyish enthusiasm for novelties and party tricks. The 'philosophical experiments' include 'to make a deaf man hear music', and 'how to tell a number that someone has chosen'.

In general, though, readers did have serious uses for their receipt books, which contained much useful information on preserving, distilling and brewing, told how to make cleaning agents at home which were expensive or else could not be bought, and showed how to test for impurities in food – very necessary guidance for consumers before the first Adulteration of Foods Act was passed in 1860. The receipts themselves were often international, sometimes translated from French or German originals. A few popular titles crossed the Atlantic: C. W. Alexander's *The housewife's friend and family help* ([1888]) was first published in Philadelphia, while MacKenzie's *Five thousand receipts* (1823) was published there after the book's original success in Britain. Cultural differences between patterns of domestic life, styles of cooking and codes of etiquette in each country made such interchanges harder with other forms of household books.

Receipt books have had a recent revival as facsimile reprints, probably because they give such a minutely detailed glimpse of daily life and its hazards before commercial manufacturers took over almost entirely the work of producing medicines, toiletries, paints, soap powders, pickles, preserves, and the whole range of household products which were once made in the home. Reprints are marketed less on the strength of their usefulness, although many receipts remain genuinely useful, than of their entertainment value. The receipts which call so casually for quantities of poisons may well horrify and amuse a modern reader, now that most of us are no longer in the habit of mixing up our own for home use. Some cookery books, well into the twentieth century, continue to include a few general household receipts, but as fewer women needed, or wanted, to know how to make their own supplies of non-food stores the market for specialised receipt books, except as curiosities, virtually disappeared.

Dictionaries and encyclopaedias

Dictionaries and encyclopaedias came into fashion during the eighteenth century. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1768–1771) in particular helped to establish the alphabetical reference book as a popular literary form. Before 1800 a handful of cookery books included the word 'dictionary' in their titles; after 1800 dictionaries of cookery, medical dictionaries and encyclopaedias and general domestic books with such titles as *Family dictionary* became more common.

Domestic encyclopaedias and dictionaries occupied an uneasy middle space between wide-ranging general works and scientific, practical cookery or medical books. Their titles often illustrated their hybrid nature, as with A. F. M. Willich's *Domestic encyclopaedia* (1802):

The domestic encyclopaedia; or a dictionary of facts, and useful knowledge: comprehending a concise view of the latest discoveries, inventions, and improvements, chiefly applicable to rural and domestic economy; together with descriptions of the most interesting objects of nature and art; the history of men and animals, in a state of health or disease; and practical hints respecting the arts and manufactures, both familiar and commercial.

Encyclopaedias of this early kind were destined for the private libraries of wealthy men – landowners, amateur scientists, possibly some doctors and clergymen. They were highly priced and often expensively bound, either by their publishers or their purchasers (the four volumes of Willich's encyclopaedia recorded here were beautifully bound in red morocco), since they were designed as much for putting knowledge on display as for actual reference. Present-day publishers of course still advertise sets of encyclopaedias as luxury goods signifying economic and intellectual status.

While the encyclopaedia form was later taken up and reproduced in some cheaper mass versions it never attracted a large market – in general people who buy books want something they can actually read. As practical reference books, dictionaries of cookery or domestic medicine were of far more use and are still being published, while the domestic encyclopaedia lost out long ago to forms which were more specialised or else simply more readable.

Compendiums

I have used the term 'compendium', which does not appear in the title of any book listed, to refer to books belonging to the best-known genre, general manuals of household management whose contents are arranged by subject. The organisation of this bibliography reflects to an extent the arrangement of a typical compendium, which would be subdivided into sections on general domestic economy including cookery, servants, the nursery, domestic medicine and formal etiquette, with possible additions.

At the start of the nineteenth century compendiums of domestic economy were continuations of an earlier genre, the schoolroom book. Written ostensibly for girls of most classes, they claimed to provide a complete summary education for young women who, in the prevailing view, needed to know little more than how to become a good servant or a good wife and mother. The same belief was conveyed

in many eighteenth century cookery books bearing titles such as 'The whole duty of a woman'⁵, and some books published after 1800 which advertised themselves as containing all a woman needed to know were, likewise, simply cookery books. Others like the following example, *The young woman's companion* ([1814]), which combined domestic economy with reading, writing, grammar and arithmetic, made a more serious attempt to live up to their titles:

The young woman's companion; or, female instructor: being a sure and complete guide to every necessary acquirement essential in forming a pleasing companion, a respectable mother or a useful member of society. Interspersed with moral and religious essays, interesting tales, and memoirs of illustrious women. To which are subjoined, several very valuable medicinal receipts, and other useful directions, requisite for every female to whom domestic economy is a desirable object.

In common with religious tracts, 'companions' had two prospective audiences, being sold to one class of people for the supposed benefit of another. The fact that numbers of them were published and sold therefore tells us little of how they were actually received by their intended readership, although we can guess that they had their critics – later educational reformers ridiculed them as epitomising the worst aspects of female education.⁶ They were related to tracts in content too, preaching the spiritual values of housework and female submission and adopting the 'uplifting' tone of the average tract, as the author of the following passage is at pains to point out:

Let us observe, in conclusion, that as the Volume is intended to form a Gift Book to Young Women, however circumstanced in life, the most scrupulous care has been bestowed upon it to render it pure in tone, and healthy in object, as well as useful in purpose. [Preface, *The young woman's companion*, (1863)]

Eventually, and mercifully, the Education Acts made such compendiums for girls obsolete, although they were to some extent replaced by domestic science textbooks.

Most compendiums published after 1850 were addressed to adult women, particularly young brides setting up home. They captured a large audience and remained steadily popular throughout the period, preserved and handed down through families. Publishers found them an ideal format: they could be sold in parts as well as in bound volumes, in cheap or de luxe editions, to suit different pockets and reach more potential readers; they lent themselves to lavish illustrations, could be compiled from a number of sources and were easy to update – new sections could always be added as women's current interests changed.

A glance at one influential book shows how a compendium could survive and adapt. J. H. Walsh's *A manual of domestic economy* was first published in 1856. In 1890 George Routledge and Sons brought out the final edition with the title barely changed – 'suited to families spending from £100 to £1,000 a year' was altered to 'from £150 to £1,500 a year'. There were some minor revisions but most significantly, the later edition featured coloured plates in addition to the original woodcuts: binding in new plates could modernise a book at a stroke. The arrangement of Walsh's manual is incidentally a clear guide to what the Victorians understood by 'household management' or 'domestic economy'. The sections were labelled 'books' as follows:

Book I. – On the practice of economy. Book II. – The house and its accessories. Book III. – Furniture and furnishing. Book IV. – Domestic servants and their duties. Book V. – The supplies of the house. Book VI. – On the maintenance of health by the proper cooking of good food. Book VII. – The nursery. Book VIII. – Horses and carriages. Book IX. – Social duties of heads of families. Book X. – The domestic treatment of disease.

Walsh was superseded in popularity by more lavish works such as *Cassell's Household Guide* (1873 to 1912) and H. C. Davidson's *The book of the home* (1900 to 1909), produced as part-series or sets of volumes. Here the authoritative prescriptive voice was softened a little, even becoming personal at times, and the books took on a less daunting appearance based on the format used by women's magazines. These later productions also gave much more space to illustrations, using the new techniques of lithography and photography. Earlier domestic manuals usually included a small number of plates and a larger number of woodcuts and engravings interspersed with the text, especially to show carving techniques and items of furniture and equipment. With photography it was possible to accompany descriptions of sample rooms with pictures of real life interiors, and to show a series of stages in a particular task by photographing a demonstrator at work. The editors even found ways of using photographs to illustrate their sections on etiquette. The main purpose of most illustrations was still to set standards in interior design and the arrangement of food, as the engraved and coloured plates of older books had done.

One function which compendiums shared with certain domestic encyclopaedias, such as Webster's *An encyclopaedia of domestic economy* (1844) was that of advertising. The chapters on furniture and equipment resemble illustrated sales catalogues, with models of kitchen ranges and washing machines on display together with smaller items of kitchen ware, household and baby linen. Often price lists were given and details of where goods could be bought, but the compilers seem to have passed on their information quite impartially. Alongside the lists of necessary household equipment with price ranges to suit different incomes the compilers also provided tables of servants' wages.

Although the emphasis was still very much on home and family, compendiums published at the turn of the century and after 1900 started to include information on employment opportunities for women and gave more attention to non-domestic recreations such as cycling. The compilers tended to explain this, when explanations were offered, by citing the so-called 'surplus woman' problem. As there were more women than men in the population a large number of women were likely to remain single, and the middle-classes were beginning to see that it was no use prescribing a life of motherhood for all their daughters. The subject of emigration turns up in a number of domestic books for the same reason – before she could assume her proper duties a woman, in most cases, needed to find a husband, and once her marriage prospects were less certain many domestic manuals were ready to offer advice on this score.

Social historians have turned to compendiums, generally the most comprehensive of the domestic manuals, for information about domestic life before 1914 but of course we need to remember that although they are useful

sources and can reveal much about social aspirations and changing fashions, they prescribed rather than portrayed styles of living. The images of women and their households presented in them are but images, frequently highly idealised and with elements of nostalgia and social snobbery. While their influence cannot be measured, their greatest effect was probably that they spread word to the less affluent as to how wealthier families lived.

Miscellanies

The domestic miscellany, a varied compilation of recipes, medical lore, hints on etiquette and snippets of useful or merely curious information, sprang out of the popular press which flourished in the middle of the period. Some books were reprinted straight from magazines such as 'The family friend', in 'numbers' to be collected or in bound volumes. Judicious editing could turn miscellaneous magazine material into dictionary or compendium form, but publishers often judged this not worth the trouble as haphazardly arranged reference books sold well enough. Apparently readers did not mind being surprised and wanted some fun mixed in with their facts. Unlike their more organised counterparts, miscellanies could be skimmed through or read aloud for entertainment, as well as consulted for reference. According to how its editor pieced it together, a miscellany could appear completely chaotic or show signs of order, but the index was usually indispensable. Robert Kemp Philp, the editor of the most famous miscellany, *Enquire within upon everything* (1856), had brisk words for critics:

If there be any among my Readers who, having turned over the pages of 'ENQUIRE WITHIN', have hastily pronounced them to be confused and ill-arranged, let them at once refer to THE INDEX, and for ever hold their peace.

The edition of 1876 has an alphabetical list of contents which reveals the scope of the book and can be taken as a model for other miscellanies, but note that although the contents are arranged alphabetically the book itself does not follow this scheme.

Adulterations of food, tests for; Beverages, preparation of, and receipts for; Bird-keeping, bee-keeping, poultry-keeping; Carving, and the general arrangements of the dinner table, tea equipage; Children, rearing and management of; Choice of food, marketing, etc.; Confectionery: cakes, jellies, sweetmeats; Commercial and monetary hints, maxims; Correct speaking, hints on writing; Decoration and ornamentation: painting, staining, gilding, etc.; Destruction of vermin, noxious animals; Dress, choice, arrangement and care of; Dyeing, scouring, cleaning, laundry operations; Emergencies and accidents, how to act in, such as cases of drowning, fire, etc.; Etiquette, forms and ceremonies of; Food of various kinds, when in season; Fuel, lighting etc., economy and management of; Household operations: carpentry [sic] mending, repairing; Indoor games and amusements; Ladies' employments: decalcomanie, diaphanerie, etc.; Legal information and advice; Medical and surgical advice; Minor complaints, coughs, cramp, etc.; Miscellaneous preparations: ink, gum, cement, etc.; Outdoor sports and pastimes, croquet; Preparation of food, cooking operations; Preserving and pickling, hints on; Recreations, artistic: modelling, preparing botanical specimens, etc.; Rules of conduct: counsels, hints, advice; Sanitary precautions and regulations: air and exercise, sleep, clothing; Sauces, relishes, zests, how to prepare; Tables of insurance, interest,

marketing, wages; Toilet requisites, receipts for, and the operations connected therewith; Enquire within upon fancy needlework.

There was evidently something for every member of the family, and the family Philp had in mind was not the carefully ordered household pictured in more expensive domestic manuals – those employing several servants and spending ‘from £100 to £1,000 a year’. To judge from the rate at which new editions were printed, the people who bought miscellanies were a ready-made market of readers, the same lower-middle-class and working-class public which was already buying cheap magazines.⁷ Miscellanies could cost as little as a penny or twopence, which put them within the reach of a working-class readership, and some could be had for nothing. Lever Brothers brought out their series of ‘Sunlight’ almanacs in the 1890s to be given away free as promotion for Sunlight soap, and many other companies found domestic miscellanies a useful place to advertise, so encouraging the supply of cheap publications.

Of all the domestic manuals, miscellanies were probably the most genuinely popular form. Evidence from contemporary sources suggests that miscellanies more than any other genre – and especially *Enquire Within* which was head and shoulders above its rivals with a sale of more than two million copies – were read, used and enjoyed by a considerable cross-section of the population.

Narratives

Domestic economy narratives, the original soap-operas, also derived from popular magazines and often first appeared as magazine serials. They aimed to provide household hints on budgeting, cooking and childcare within the more or less realistic framework of a story with which readers could identify. The stock characters were the young, inexperienced and incompetent wife, the husband whose patience often snapped and who sometimes even deserted his family when faced with deteriorating standards at home, and the older, wiser woman – friend, neighbour or relative – whose advice saves the day. Beneath the surface and the endless exhortations to save stale bread, get up earlier in the morning and make economical rissoles, lie deeper themes which must have haunted many women: the death of a child; bankruptcy, desertion or widowhood; losing class status and respectability which were perhaps only recently acquired, or worse still losing sexual respectability; the loneliness of a bride in her new home.

The most prolific author in this field must have been Mrs Eliza Warren, who published *How I managed on two hundred pounds a year* (1864), *How I managed my children from infancy to marriage* (1865), *Comfort for small incomes* (1866), *A house and its furnishings* ([1869]), *My lady-help and what she taught me* (1877), *How the lady-help taught girls to cook and be useful* (1879) and *A young wife's perplexities* (1886). She wrote several other books on needlework and on less strictly domestic issues and edited a women's magazine, ‘The ladies' treasury’, where the material for some of her books first appeared. Her work was well enough known to provoke a parody, *How they mismanaged their house on £500 a year. A narrative, by 'Mr Warren'* (1878), a dull and rather pointless book whose wit lies almost entirely in its title. Her critics may have sneered, but Eliza Warren's books evidently had a rapid sale and struck a chord with a particular readership among the young, urban

lower-middle-class, in homes which had just begun to employ a servant or where a first baby was expected.

Eliza Warren was an experienced professional journalist who knew her market well and knew how to play on her readers' emotions in order to sell next week's instalment. Her narratives were sometimes crudely melodramatic and sentimental, yet occasionally her writing achieves considerable subtlety and restraint, as in her portrayal of a young mother's grief, withdrawal and isolation after her child dies. At a time when the death of a child was a common literary theme Eliza Warren's treatment of it is unusual. Instead of investing the event with great significance, religious or otherwise, she was more concerned to show how it affected the mother's ability to cope with her domestic duties. This difference in treatment presumably arose from her concern to reflect back to her readers a recognisable picture of their own experience, not merely from her more modest claims as a writer; it is also possible that on occasions she was not writing fiction but autobiography, as indeed she claimed she was. A different kind of ambiguity hovers around aspects of her books which are today richly comic. The combination of mundane practical advice, object lessons and spiritual guidance was quite common at the time in books for the young. Many writers could be perfectly unaware that there was any humour in such juxtapositions of facts and morals, but there is no doubt that some contemporaries did find them ridiculous. It is most likely, though not entirely certain, that Mrs Warren saw nothing unserious about her index to *How the lady-help taught girls to cook and be useful* (1879) which included the following entries: egg sauce, to make; elephant's foot, how cooked; emigration, means of a happy future; . . . soda, why used in cooking; soles, to choose; soul, every, has its mission . . .

Thrift was the dominant theme in narratives written by other authors, and the main function of the narrative itself was to make the advice on penny-pinching less dreary. The titles made the import of the books perfectly plain – *How a schoolmistress may live upon seventy pounds a year* ([1887]), *Appearances || how to keep them up on a limited income* (Mrs Alfred Praga, 1899), *Love in a cottage || or making the most of a small income* (Agatha Hodgson, ([1891])). The writers also tended to be preoccupied with the ‘servant problem’, interpreted variously as managing without servants altogether, advising young and inexperienced housewives on how to manage inexperienced young servant girls, or advice on how to cope with that doomed invention, the ‘lady-help’.

Another small group of narratives dealt with the less tangible virtues of good housekeeping and were more akin to religious tracts. The few which are listed here, including Esther Copley's *Hints for happy homes* ([1859]) and an anonymous work, *The new home; or wedded life; its duties, cares and pleasures* (1862) published jointly with the Ladies' Sanitary Association, represent a much larger number of advice books which did not offer practical hints but aimed to point out to women the advantages of fulfilling their duties as wives and mothers, and warned of the dismal fates awaiting those who failed. While women undoubtedly bought Mrs Warren's books for themselves, they may well have had these more solemn works presented to them. The more expensive and elaborate bindings tend to suggest either a slightly wealthier audience or else that they were bought as gifts.

Domestic science and domestic economy textbooks

Domestic economy as a school subject was known at various times and for different purposes as domestic science, housecraft and domestic economy. I have used 'domestic science' as a general classification as a convenient way of distinguishing textbooks from other books, since 'domestic economy' was long in use as a synonym for cookery and appeared in a great many titles of non-academic books, while 'domestic science' always had a more specialised usage.

Most of the textbooks listed here were published after 1875 and were for use in elementary schools. Before the Education Act of 1870 gave local authorities the duty of providing schooling (though school attendance was not made compulsory until 1880, and was not free until after 1891) most elementary schools were established by the two large voluntary societies, the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church (more usually known simply as 'the National'), and the British and Foreign School Society which supported undenominational religious instruction. Apart from their religious differences, elementary schools of both types taught much the same limited curriculum which was determined less by their own managers than by the government 'Code' for awarding grants to approved schools which taught approved subjects to a required standard.

In order to understand why, we need to look at the history of elementary education, and domestic economy teaching in particular. The 'Revised Code' of 1862, devised by Robert Lowe who was vice-president of the Committee of Council of Education which conducted school inspections, was an economy measure as well as an attempt to improve educational standards. It cancelled all previous maintenance grant regulations and instead gave school managers a unified grant based primarily on school attendance figures and on the results of examining the pupils in the '3 Rs' and in certain other 'class' or 'specific' subjects. This was the 'payments by results' system, which became so notorious, and which, while it may not have introduced mechanical teaching methods and a narrow curriculum into elementary schools for the first time, certainly did nothing to improve them. There were a number of subsequent modifications to the Code but the system itself was retained until 1895, and textbook titles frequently refer to particular Codes, reassuring teachers that the book's contents were in accordance with the current official requirements.

In common with other subjects, teaching in domestic economy was assessed either as a 'class subject' or as a 'specific subject'. The specific subjects were taken by older pupils between Standards V and VII and attracted larger grants per pupil, but only a minority of pupils took them or were examined in them; class subjects, as the name implies, were taught to whole classes and a set proportion of each class had to pass an examination before the grant was awarded. Domestic subjects were only supposed to be taught to girls: there is one account of a boy pupil who happened to learn up a domestic economy textbook, was examined on it but could not be counted towards the grant because of his sex.⁸

Once introduced domestic subjects took over an increasing proportion of the curriculum for girls, as Anne Digby and Peter Seaby⁹ note:

Under the Education Department's Codes for elementary schools which started in 1862, needlework became an obligatory subject for girls, and in compensation for this they were permitted a lower standard in the annual arithmetic examinations. With the growth in the range of subjects which could earn grants from the government for a school, girls tended to spend a growing proportion of their time on domestic subjects. It was possible to take plain needlework from 1875, cookery from 1882, laundry work from 1890, and domestic economy from 1894, as 'class' subjects in which the inspector assessed the whole class for grant-earning purposes. For older girls in the higher standards of the elementary school one of two optional 'specific' subjects, in which they could be examined individually after 1875, was domestic economy. In 1878 the Education Department made this a mandatory subject for girls, so that their choice of academic 'specific' subjects was curtailed severely.

Not surprisingly, there is little variation between different books published during the 'payments by results' period of the Codes. The domestic economy syllabus was divided into three stages:

- Stage I. Food; its composition and nutritive value. Clothing and Washing.
- Stage II. Food; its functions. The Dwelling, warming, cleaning, and ventilation.
- Stage III. Food; its preparation and culinary treatment. Rules for health; the management of a sick room.

The books written in compliance with these requirements of the Code could be used with hardly any accompanying practical instruction and were often simply memorised by the pupils. It was at first not only usual but essential, given the lack of space, staff and equipment, for a teacher to use the demonstration method when practical cookery was introduced, with up to seventy girls at a time looking on. Conditions eventually improved but practical lessons were expensive for schools, pupils and parents alike, and there is little doubt that when girls were given practical work to do rather than simply learning the theory of domestic economy many teachers, school managers and other interested parties took the opportunity of getting their own chores performed at no cost.¹⁰

Domestic economy teaching was introduced into elementary schools with the primary aim of improving the living conditions of the working class. There were certainly advocates of domestic training who had another aim in mind, procuring a steady supply of better-trained and willing servants, but the Education Department made plain that this was not its official policy (although they could hardly do otherwise since parents, already suspicious, would simply not have sent their daughters to school to be educated for the explicit benefit of the employing class). Support for domestic science in schools came from men and women pioneering improvements in public health, hygiene and sanitation who saw clear links between ignorance, poverty and disease, but many supporters had ideological grounds for promoting the subject. A number of writers complaining about the supposedly declining standards of housewifery in the country saw the feckless housewife as a main cause of disease and poverty and preferred to disregard her economic context. Margaret Weddell¹¹ notes the prevalence of this attitude at a conference on domestic economy held in 1878:

It is interesting . . . to note that no twinges of conscience or feelings of responsibility pierce the complacence of the speakers at the Conference in regard to the state of

slovenly squalor which they deplore in the homes of many of 'the labouring poor'. One of them emphasizes her talk on health by pointing out that illness for the poor means the danger of the germs of the disease being carried to the rich. Another tells her audience 'it is not the low rate of wages, or the tyranny of masters, or the greed of landlords which is the real root of their miseries, but thriftlessness on the one hand, and intemperance on the other, are the evil geniuses of our English households'.

Louise Creighton's exhortation to domestic economy teachers published in *The economics of the household* (1907) puts in a nutshell the theory that schools ought to aim to reach beyond the individual pupil - 'Behind the child you are teaching, you must see the family, behind the family, the state'.

Against this background the evangelical tone of many authors is only to be expected. Girls are repeatedly told how important it is for them to learn domestic economy, and the textbooks try to instil the right attitude as well as to impart knowledge. Jane Stoker in *Home comfort: a complete manual of domestic economy for schools and colleges* ([1876]) cites the highest authority:

The Household is a divine institution . . . father, mother and children form the Divinely appointed household.

Mrs Wigley in *Simple lessons in domestic economy* ([1878]) echoes Ruskin:

A woman has her own special work to do in the world . . . Every woman is a queen, and her kingdom is the home.

The Reverend Faunthorpe, author of *Household Science* (1883), puts it more forthrightly (the book's sub-title 'Readings in necessary knowledge for girls and young women' recalls the 'young women's companions' of earlier days although the book's contents are entirely in line with the Code):

This is the science of domestic economy; and every English girl ought to know it well, for upon girls and women depend almost entirely the domestic happiness of men, and the economical management of their earnings.

Even more bluntly, the author of *Longman's domestic economy readers* (1910) writes:

[Domestic economy] is a very important subject for girls to study, because all work connected with the home is woman's work.

In the same book girls are told to resolve themselves to be 'model housewives'. The message for girls from these examples, and there are plenty more like them, was that they had to learn domestic economy firstly because domestic work was their inescapable and proper role in life, and secondly because it would benefit others (men, mainly). Middle class women had of course for long been receiving the same message, but it is worth noting that at the same time that girls from working-class families were being taught in such a systematic way that their place was in the home, the schools starting up for middle-class girls were not emphasising domestic subjects at all.¹²

As long as the Codes were in force, the authors of domestic science textbooks were obliged to combine some elementary science with a certain amount of basic practical instruction in the way the official syllabus prescribed. Those who criticised the syllabus frequently commented on the 'science' side of domestic economy teaching, which to some appeared unnecessarily theoretical and difficult

while others found it superficial. From the turn of the century onwards it was easier for authors, and teachers, to develop domestic science teaching as they saw fit. In both Britain and America this was a period when domestic science professionals were trying hard to get public recognition for the importance of their subject, attempting to set up courses in colleges and universities as well as in high schools and wanting to establish how respectably scientific domestic science could be.¹³ Among many examples of the newer scientific approach were Thomas Cartwright's *Domestic science || the science of domestic economy and hygiene treated experimentally* (1900), Catherine Buckton's works which overlapped considerably with the related school subject of hygiene, and *Domestic economy in theory and practice* (1901) by Marion Bidder and Florence Baddeley, which showed how much more important the theoretical teaching of housework had become than the practical. In a prefatory note to the book, Mary Playne (President of the National Union for the Technical Education of Women in Domestic Science) advanced a new argument for teaching domestic economy to girls, based on the scientific component of the course, when she wrote:

. . . the general public may be brought by the perusal of this volume to a larger knowledge of the importance of this education for their daughters, not only from a utilitarian point of view, but also as valuable training in powers of observation, in drawing out individual energies, and in other essential mental and moral qualities.

There was inevitably a reaction to the proposal that cookery, housework and laundrywork should be taught as experimental sciences. Mary Hill's *Homecraft in the classroom* ([1914]) took a determinedly practical approach, with illustrations of pupils polishing their own school desks, learning to wield a broom and cleaning the classroom windows. In her introduction she explains that:

The work was always approached as some aspect of home-life, never as so-called 'Domestic Science', which, alas, is frequently very doubtful science with nothing 'domestic' about it at all!

In the same year, with the outbreak of the first world war, Marguerite Fedden returned to the theme of a girl's sacred duty in *Housecraft* ([1914]), this time explaining that girls could serve their country best through performing their household duties and caring for their families conscientiously.

A handful of books stand out from the majority of domestic science textbooks, either because their authors were able to perceive the dreary monotony of much domestic science teaching and tried in various ways to enliven it, or because they are directed at different age-groups. Mrs Wigley's domestic economy readers for younger girls used narratives to present the necessary information in what she hoped will be an entertaining way; these books also had the advantage of doubling as reading books for ordinary lessons in reading. A Scottish manual, *Domestic economy for the use of schools* (1878) used the catechism form, and as the following extract shows was influenced by the religious model not only in its teaching style:

- Q.What is 'Domestic economy'?
- A.The wise management of a household.
- Q.For what purpose did God create woman?
- A.That she might be a help meet for man.

Q. Can a woman be a help meet for man without having a knowledge of domestic economy?

A. NO; every woman ought to know how to make a home comfortable.

Mary Headdon's *Household object lessons* (1886) was intended for infants in kindergarten, and in 1887 she put to the Cross Commission on Elementary Education the suggestion that three-year old girls in Board Schools should be taught to do household chores in time to music, in order to learn to enjoy them and so that they would not see domestic service as 'a life of drudgery and degradation'.¹⁴ The idea was not adopted. At the other end of the scale the editors of *Household administration || its place in the higher education of women* ([1910]), Alice Ravenhill and Catherine Schiff, turned their attention to training adult women with proposals that housewives should learn economics, bacteriology and 'sanitary science' in order to perform their tasks with greater efficiency.

There is evidence that domestic science teaching in elementary schools was resented by pupils and, to an even greater extent, by their parents. From the comments of many participants in domestic economy conferences, it is clear that parents did have grounds for their suspicion that elementary education was going to be used as domestic service training. Newsholme and Scott (1894) wrote that:

Teachers should, when possible, advise mothers to encourage their daughters to become good domestic servants in preference to entering upon indifferent callings which frequently entail late hours, injury to health and exposure to temptation.

While the textbooks themselves generally do not give such explicit directions, it is quite usual to come across references to the value of domestic training not only for a girl's future life as a housewife and mother, but as a servant. Writing in *Our dwellings healthy and unhealthy || addressed to girls attending the Leeds Board Schools* Catherine Buckton seemed not to see any difference:

The decennial census returns of 1881 tell us that the number of females employed in domestic service in England is no less than 1,250,285, and besides these returns we must not forget to include the 1,200,000 and more wives and mothers who are domestic servants in their own houses.

Even when reformers advanced the argument – hardly any more acceptable to those on the receiving end – that domestic training in schools would improve the appalling standards of working-class homes, they were conscious of the ultimate benefits to themselves as employers of servants. The poet and playwright Augusta Webster went to the second Domestic Economy Congress, held in Manchester in 1878. She noted in *A housewife's opinions* that the papers read at the Congress were without exception in favour of domestic economy in elementary schools (it was made a compulsory subject for girls later that year). Her comments are interesting as a clear account of the arguments for and against domestic economy teaching, which she saw not as the teaching of a new science but as an unfortunate necessity which ought eventually to disappear from the curriculum.

As to teaching household processes in the elementary schools, for elementary education it certainly is an evil that girls whose only opportunities of intellectual training are those given them at these schools, and whose school career is necessarily timed to terminate while they are still children, should have a larger portion of their school hours appropriated to household arts which could better be learned with opportunities of

household practice. But, on the other hand, the evil of the common ignorance, slovenliness, and indifference as to these important home technicalities, of working women is so great to themselves and to the nation that something must be sacrificed to impress them with a respect for housewifery. If the mother cannot teach needlework the schoolmistress must; if the girls have no chance anywhere else of seeing clean sensible cooking they must have it 'demonstrated' in class-rooms. It would be over sanguine to expect the pupils to learn much serviceably in such a way, but one thing they will certainly learn, and that is that it would be creditable to them to excel in such matters. Leaving school with this feeling and not entirely ignorant of processes, with, too, the need for care and cleanliness drilled into their minds, many of them will enter service anxious to improve; and domestic service thus rehabilitated could not but become their best training school in household skills. Better trained servants, marrying, will be better trained managers of their husbands' homes, and their children will have in them better patterns of housewifery. And so improvement may make improvement till home and domestic service are, as they ought to be, sufficient without turning schoolrooms into kitchens and planning colleges to train cooks and seamstresses . . .

Apart from the general resentment such attitudes incurred in parents of working-class girls, there were many instances when girls were held up as examples to their mothers, thus angering parents (mothers more than fathers, who sometimes did approve), as Helen Sillitoe¹⁵ notes:

the early exponents of the subject often created a delicate situation between the home and the school by treating their pupils as mere channels of information to be passed on to their mothers.

The prevailing concern about public health, sanitation and contagious disease influenced the domestic economy syllabus and also led to a separate subject, hygiene, being taught in schools. I have included here those which were mainly domestic, such as Catherine Buckton's *Our dwellings healthy and unhealthy* (1885), and a number of laundrywork textbooks such as Mrs Black's *Practical laundry work* ([1896]) for pupils, and the classic work for teachers *A teacher's manual of elementary laundry work* (1891) by Fanny Calder and E. E. Mann. To complete the picture we need to remember not only the textbooks on hygiene, but also the much larger number of school cookery books which were published.

Later books on domestic economy were mostly written by women, who often listed such credentials for authorship as qualifications in cookery and domestic science at one of the training colleges, and teaching experience. In contrast some earlier male authors, who were professionals at school textbook compilation rather than in domestic economy, based their authority on their clerical status or on their scientific expertise in other fields. Men who wrote domestic economy textbooks in the early days of the subject – William Tegetmeier is one example – did not always wish to acknowledge their work in later years when domestic science had become, at all levels, a field for women only.

Rural domestic economy

A small number of domestic economy books published during the first part of the nineteenth century differed from other manuals because they specialised in giving advice to country dwellers, both to the landowning and professional classes and to agricultural labourers. Rural domestic economy concentrated more on tasks

which needed a greater amount of space and time, such as brewing and bread-making, curing ham, attending to livestock and growing food crops. The actual differences between town and country life partly account for these manuals, but they also had the aim, often directly expressed, of persuading country women to return to the earlier practices of working at home for their families, rather than buying provisions elsewhere with the money they or their husbands had earned. The manuals of rural domestic economy thus tend to be even more nostalgic than most, although it is difficult to assess how closely they related to the lifestyles of their intended readers. The best known, then and now, is William Cobbett's *Cottage economy* (1822) which was published in seventeen editions in the nineteenth century and reprinted twice this century. It is a frankly nostalgic and polemical work which certainly influenced a number of other authors and probably a wider section of the wealthier classes, but whether it influenced the agricultural labouring class, as Cobbett intended, is more doubtful.

Cobbett was already too late, in 1822, with his complaints that brewing and bread-making were giving way to tea-drinking and potato-eating, for these changes in the lives of the rural working-class had been well underway for decades.¹⁶ His attacks on these new habits were prompted in all likelihood by his need to find an explanation for the poverty of agricultural workers and by his fears about the changing role of women. He declared that when women stopped baking and brewing but instead made tea and cooked potatoes the end results were poverty, enfeeblement, idleness and even immorality – compared with the cottage housewife of former times whom he describes both sentimentally and lustfully as having the sweat of labour on her brow, a wife who could not brew and bake was hardly worth her keep:

Every woman, high or low, ought to know how to make bread. If she do not, she is unworthy of trust and confidence: and, indeed, a mere burden upon the community.

Give me for a beautiful sight, a neat and smart woman, heating her oven and setting her bread! And if the bustle does make the sign of labour glisten upon her brow, where is the man that would not kiss that off, rather than lick the plaster from the cheek of a duchess?

Whatever influence Cobbett had, stemmed from this style of rhetoric rather than from the practical instructions in *Cottage economy* which are on the vague side. In later editions he included his wife's instructions for using Indian corn (maize flour) as a staple, but despite his own enthusiasm there is no evidence that his advice was followed by his readers.¹⁷

The writers who used Cobbett as a source tend also to have written books preaching to the labouring class the virtues of an old-fashioned, thrifty style of life. Esther Hewlett, later known as Esther Copley, was the author of *Cottage comforts* (1825) which also aimed to improve the standard of living in rural working-class homes; it is no coincidence that her other works are virtually religious tracts. But the heart of the problem for such authors, with their fierce resistance to change, was that the women who were carrying on with the traditional chores of the cottage wife did not need their advice. For those who had abandoned them, whether through choice or necessity, there was no going back.

Domestic economy for the working-class, and thrift books

Books written for working-class readers fall into four categories: instructions to servants, domestic science textbooks for use in elementary schools, books on rural domestic economy addressed to the agricultural labouring class, and advice books which are closely related to tracts. Books in the last group, which I shall discuss here, were often intended to be given away as improving literature by visitors to the poor, Sunday school teachers, employers and other representatives of middle and upper class interests.

As I have only included advice books with at least an element of practical instruction, these domestic manuals should be seen as just a part of the large amount of prescriptive and moralising literature aimed at the poor by the better-off classes in society, preaching the virtues of temperance, docility and thrift. Augusta Anne Pitney's *Cottage economy, by a cottager* (1855) is a rare example of a work in which the author meets her readers on equal terms – she was a former pupil-teacher, and the book includes three lectures addressed to the girls of the Westbourne National School. A much more typical class difference between writer and reader is starkly revealed in the title of another work, *A few hints for home happiness and comfort, addressed chiefly to village girls on their leaving school. By a lady* (1860). Ladies assumed that their rank required them to go into the homes of the poor in person to offer criticism and advice, so penning a book of hints could have been seen as an act of kindness and condescension (in the original well-meaning sense of the word) or simply as the natural duty of a gentlewoman.

John Walters, the Rector of Norton and author of *Thrift lessons* (1881), hoped that his book would prove useful for prize-givings in elementary schools, mothers' meetings and free libraries, 'and for distribution by those employers of labour who have at heart the moral and social improvement of their workmen'. It evidently never occurred to Walters that the workmen themselves might well have suspected their employers of having other motives for presenting them with a manual of advice on how to eke out a small income. Thrift as a virtue in itself, rather than as a dreary necessity, was a doctrine adopted by some middle-class men and women as well as preached by them to the working-class, and a number of books on saving money appeared throughout the period. Savings schemes were becoming more widespread and general books on the philosophy of 'self-help' were popular – Samuel Smiles' book of that name was published in 1859. As early as 1824 William Kitchiner's *The housekeeper's ledger* included a tirade against feckless spending, while in the next century Josiah Oldfield's *How to live cheaply* (1906) was based on a collection of readers' letters on the theme of thrift. Yet while those who had less need to scrimp could gain satisfaction from their efforts at economising, even take pride in them, domestic economy reformers found to their continual exasperation that the poor who presumably most needed thrift lessons were unenthusiastic about them. Their frustration at the incurable habits of the poor often shows through, and to emphasise how important their advice was they frequently accompanied it with moral tales contrasting the happy homes of the thrifty, temperate and deserving poor with the squalor and misery of the thriftless.

From what authors said of their own works, it is evident that compared with the

more mundane practicality of manuals for the middle-classes, books for working-class women could have a greater usefulness by far, offering to rescue the poor from unhappiness and degradation. This is especially true for books which are almost temperance tracts such as J. M. Philp's *How to make home happy* (1864). The message is spelled out in a loftier way in Mrs Phebe Lankester's *The national thrift reader* ([1880]) which is 'illustrated by lives of great and good men and women, who by their perseverance and thrift raised themselves from insignificance to be models of excellence for the present generation'.

Women, especially young women in service whose reading matter might be scrutinised and censored, may have read these improving manuals when they were unable to read much else, and may have gained some amusement and rather less practical help from them. Religious tracts could similarly be read and enjoyed simply as cheap or even free reading matter, and by no means all the recipients of tracts and advice books would have resented their tone or content. The fact remains that most of the domestic economy books for working-class women were intended for readers who were virtually a captive audience, while the books bought by them and presumably read voluntarily by them were not so much these works expressly designed for the improvement of the working class, as the much livelier and more entertaining miscellanies.

Indian household management

British women living in India and in other parts of the world under British imperial rule found that ordinary domestic manuals were of little use to them. To meet their needs a number of specialised books were published both overseas and in Britain, dealing with Indian household management, childcare and medicine in other climates, and preparations for travelling abroad. India was the destination for most of the thousands of British women travelling to find or join husbands in the outposts of the Empire, although the 'Hardships abroad' section in the anonymous book *Hardships made easy* ([1864]) even had advice for travellers going to China. Before they set sail women could find out what to expect on the journey and what to take with them from a number of guides such as *The Englishwoman in India* (1864) or Mrs Eliot James' *A guide to Indian household management* ([1879]), which advised on outfits and packing as well as on bungalows, furnishing, servants and cookery. The best and probably most important of these manuals was Steel and Gardiner's *The complete Indian housekeeper and cook* (1890), first published in Bombay in 1888 with a final twelfth edition appearing in 1921.

Books on colonial household management differed from the books for women resident in Britain in three respects. First, and most obviously, they supplied information about local conditions – prices, foodstuffs, materials, an essential basic vocabulary, recipes suited to the foods available and to a lesser extent to the climate. Elizabeth Garrett's *Morning hours in India* (1887) included tables of Indian weights, an Indian ready reckoner, tables of rents and wages and a calendar for growing fruit and vegetables in the Punjab. Most books had a sizeable section on Indian cookery.

The next major difference concerned the status of expatriate British women. Colonial wives could afford, and were expected, to employ a much larger number

of servants than they would have had in Britain. Their role as housewives included less routine domestic work and more supervision. The manuals gave general advice on how to manage 'natives' and deal with the linguistic and cultural divide, besides detailing the various duties of all the servants in the household. Flora Annie Steel and Grace Gardiner, authors of *The complete Indian housekeeper and cook*, expressed a common attitude when they wrote that 'the Indian servant is a child in everything save age, and should be treated as a child; that is to say, kindly, but with the greatest firmness'. Similar stereotypes abound in their chapters on servants and in books by other authors.

The last difference for women was the choice they faced if they were mothers, between keeping their children with them or sending them to England to boarding schools or to be brought up by relatives. Bringing up children in India and in other colonial societies was generally reckoned to be more hazardous than in Britain, and in tropical regions the infant mortality rate was indeed higher, especially in southern Africa, than the already high rate for babies born into the British climate. Steel and Gardiner recommended different courses of action in their chapters 'On the hills' and 'In the plains', Steel arguing that it was more important for wives to remain with their husbands in the plains during the hottest weather, with their children safely back in England, while Gardiner described how the annual trip to the hills enabled her to bring up a large family without prolonged separations from her children.

For girls brought up in India, Lilian Sawtell's *Outlines of domestic science || a manual for Indian readers* (1912) aimed to teach points of household management relevant to 'special Indian needs and conditions'. In her preface Lilian Sawtell complained that 'so far the schools in India have been dependent upon books dealing with Domestic Science only from the point of view of people living in England'. In many ways it is true to say that colonial household management was always seen from the point of view of people living in England, even when authors had spent twenty years or more as residents elsewhere. In combination with advice on how to adapt to local conditions manuals offered encouragement to women not to adapt beyond a certain point, but instead to keep up at all costs the normal routines and living standards of any middle-class British household. Steel and Gardiner went so far as to deny emphatically, as they themselves put it, the common assertion that housekeeping in India had to run on different lines from housekeeping in England – 'some modification, of course, there must be, *but as little as possible*'. In their way manuals on colonial household management are as curious now for their similarities with other manuals – evidence of the British refusal to adapt – as they are for their unique differences.

The books listed here are of course only those published in Britain. Many more manuals for English-speaking households abroad were published elsewhere.

Furnishing and interior decoration

In the latter part of the nineteenth century interior decorating became an occupation open to a few women as professional employment, while for most middle-class women the changes in fashion known as the 'aesthetic movement', the 'artistic homes' movement and later as 'art nouveau' meant at the least a

greater self-consciousness about how their homes were furnished. Compendiums and general domestic economy books gave more space to descriptions and illustrations of furniture and schemes of decoration than they had earlier in the period, and some books specialised in advising housewives and householders on how their homes should look. Hard work, efficiency and devotion were no longer enough; women also needed 'good taste' if they were to succeed at home-making. Jenni Calder¹⁸ suggests why this happened when it did:

With a rapidly growing middle class and a fluid situation it became increasingly important to know who and what people were. Where people lived, how people lived, and the things they had in their houses were the main guides. The aristocracy did not need to worry so much about these things, because they had their titles and most of them had their land, and many of them had splendid houses that needed little embellishment to convince people of their worth. But the newly rich especially did need to worry, because everyone else was poised to categorize their social status according to the way they conducted themselves. 'Good taste' became a means of distinguishing the deservedly middle class from the vulgar, those who were sensitive about their responsibilities from those who simply had a lot of money to throw around.

The books listed here which are especially concerned with furnishing and decoration represent a larger body of literature which was not purely domestic or aimed at women exclusively, but they show where the ideas of such influential designers as William Morris and Charles Eastlake intersected with the aspirations of a section of the middle-class.

Jane Panton was a professional interior decorator who wrote a number of books on home-making, including the revealingly titled *Homes of taste* (1890) and *Suburban residences and how to circumvent them* (1896). There was enough demand for such works for the publishers Macmillan and Company to bring out a series entitled 'Art at home', which included *Suggestions for house decoration* (1878) by Lady Mary Anne Barker and *The dining-room* (1878) by Mrs M. J. Loftie. These were books which in effect were explaining how to live, not just how to furnish and decorate a home – Florence Gardiner's *Furnishings and fittings for every home* ([1894]) for example went well beyond the apparent intention of the title, giving advice on household expenditure, entertaining and housekeeping routines. In contrast Charles Eastlake's *Hints on household taste* (1868), one of the original publications which set out to reform middle-class taste at a time when Victorian living rooms were filling up with indifferently made and carelessly bought clutter, was not much more than a detailed exposition of styles of furniture, wallpaper patterns and architectural design, but it was an important book which had a considerable influence on other writers who borrowed from his illustrations, descriptions and comments on good taste.

Specialised books on furnishing and decoration were never published in large numbers but set against the small minority of readers who actually bought such books, a much larger number of women were able to follow the latest ideas in general domestic economy books and in magazines. As more housewives were alerted to the possibilities of self-expression through interior design and to the status implications of 'good taste', the market changed as it expanded. Magazines took over from books to provide a less static format for communicating the fashions in design which were now changing with ever increasing speed.

Laundrywork

Laundrywork was in a sense an optional extra to the work of a middle-class household – it had to be done, but it did not have to be done at home. Until laundrywork became a school subject most laundry manuals were either technical works for the trade or instruction books for laundrymaids in private homes. One early publication, William Tucker's *The family dyer and scourer* (1818) was written by a professional for the use of those families who had no commercial laundry nearby and were obliged to do the work themselves, but it was clearly more usual for the heavy work of washing clothing and furnishings to be 'sent out' or 'put out'. Later in the century tables of servants' wages show that servants expected to be paid more if they had to do laundrywork, and laundry is usually itemised separately in sample household accounts. As late as 1910 Maud Taylor wrote in a chapter on 'Domestic arts' published in Ravenhill and Schiff's *Household administration* (1910) that:

The question of the position of the modern woman towards laundry-work seems to have resolved itself into one of income. If she can pay for the services of a steam laundry, she does so. In the United Kingdom it is estimated that there are 30,000 public laundries, but we have yet to find one that can produce a list of charges within reasonable limits of a small income . . .

Without servants, and unable to pay commercial laundry charges, middle-class housewives eventually had to take on the work themselves at home, and at the end of the nineteenth century enough new inventions were coming on to the market to make laundrywork a less heavy and time-consuming chore.

Laundry wrinkles, for the house and factory ([1894]) and *Laundry management || a handbook for use in private and public and laundries* (1889) could not have been published much later, when the techniques and equipment used in commercial laundries and in private homes had less in common, but they show that washing at home was still seen as a considerable undertaking. For working-class women the complicated instructions in specialised manuals must have been largely irrelevant, but nevertheless girls in elementary schools were taught all the intricacies of laundrywork as a special subject and were obliged to study 'washing' as an integral part of the domestic economy syllabus. Wealthier families with enough space and enough servants to have their laundry done at home were always able, throughout the period, to find whatever instructions they needed in the relevant sections of domestic economy compendiums or in manuals addressed to their maids.

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In this brief survey I have attempted to provide a historical context for domestic economy books published between 1800 and 1914, but it must now be clear that many authors themselves tried to provide their readers with a social and moral context. They were often quite conscious that their role was not only to convey practical information but also to inculcate moral precepts and correct attitudes. Of course authors of domestic economy books were far from alone in this. Even without taking into account other sources such as sermons and other religious writing, newspapers, magazines, novels, songs and poems, women were exhorted

to the proper fulfilment of their duties through an extensive collection of general advice books which are hardly represented here. The books of Sarah Stickney Ellis¹⁹ are among the best known, but in the course of researching this bibliography I encountered dozens more, often anonymous, writers who set out to explain to women their proper duties as daughters, wives and mothers.

The framework for the moral view of a woman's duties at the start of the nineteenth century was provided by the Christian churches, as it had been for centuries before. Wifely submission, which was divinely ordained or at least insisted upon by church and state alike, entailed that women had certain domestic duties and were obliged to discharge them as creditably as possible. A bad housewife was a bad wife; a bad wife was a bad woman. Authors of advice manuals used religious terminology as a matter of course and for authorities of every kind it was in any case quite natural for women to be addressed in those terms and reminded of their obligations, both religious and marital, whatever the context. They needed only to warn women against failing to please, through incompetence, wastefulness or wifely insubordination.

In the second half of the century authors faced a different kind of threat to their system of values. They still had to caution women against failing to please their husbands, but what if women simply refused to please men, and rejected the values of domesticity in favour of alternatives such as education and work outside the home? Religious precepts did not disappear entirely from domestic manuals but the rhetoric authors tended to use underwent a change, becoming more persuasive and less dictatorial, offering rational arguments for women to aim at nothing more than being good housekeepers or else painting enticing pictures of the happy homes it was women's lot to create. From Mrs Ann Taylor's *Practical hints to young females, on the duties of a wife, a mother, and a mistress of a family* (1815) to Mrs Hallie Miles' *The ideal home and its problems* (1911), the change was from an explicitly moral stance to a sentimental view of the domestic ideal, although both books are in a sense moral treatises in which practical hints figure almost as mere illustration.

From 1800 to 1914 so much had changed that the domestic economy ideal could no longer be taken for granted – even if war had not intervened, the role of women could not have remained as static as their many advisers wished it to be. The words of Mrs Stallard, author of *The house as home* (1913) may hark back to the previous century but they are also surely a response to a new uneasy world in which women are loudly questioning the certainties she wants them to accept:

Man never was, and never will be, a home-maker; that greatest of all powers, to my mind, is vested solely in woman. The delicate construction of her mind can alone grasp the importance of trifles, and master the multifarious details which convert a house into a home, not the ordinary place where people live, but that holy of holies whose inmates are clad in invincible armour for the world's fray, and whose influence stretches easily to the far corners of the earth and reaches out towards generations yet unborn.

SERVANTS

Only one real distinction is possible between the work performed by domestic servants and the work of the housewife: domestic work was paid for when carried out by servants, but family members doing the same work were unpaid.²⁰ If she could afford a servant, the mistress of the household would undertake the lighter work herself and assign the dirtier, heavier chores to her servant. In other respects, the way work was shared between mistress and servant must have varied considerably from household to household, and even from day to day. Manuals, and chapters within general works on the management and duties of servants, described ideal arrangements. The actual arrangement of a household depended on the experience and competence of the servant, who was often untrained and very young – although the same might be said for her mistress; on the number and ages of children in the family, the health and strength of mistress and servant, employers' expectations, and not least the wages they could afford to pay. Domestic manuals and cookery books provided receipts and instructions for use by both mistress and servant, regardless of whether they specified (as some did) who was supposed to do the work. As for books specifically for and about servants, even those which were not obviously moral tracts were never simply neutral instruction books. They set standards of behaviour and efficiency for both servants and mistresses which many households can never have achieved.

A myth has grown up about domestic life before 1914, when every housewife had apparently ample leisure and a house full of servants.²¹ It is a myth which domestic manuals themselves contributed to, with their ranking orders of maids and footmen and detailed enumerations of the duties of each. Yet as Theresa MacBride points out in *The Domestic Revolution*,²² most middle-class households employed no more than one or two servants, and a sizeable proportion did not employ any. Most domestic servants were young women who saw their occupation as temporary, and who worked in isolation or with a single other servant. The faithful old family retainer, who appeared in idealised form in both fiction and domestic literature,²³ did exist, as did the wealthy household employing a very large staff, but they were very far from typical. I have already suggested that domestic manuals should be used cautiously as evidence of how their readers lived. Books dealing with domestic servants, particularly the manuals which list their duties, are especially likely to give a misleading and one-dimensional account of their subject unless set against a wider context.

Given that there were no tasks performed exclusively by servants, that few learned their trade from books, and that some were illiterate,²⁴ the market for practical books aimed solely at servants must have been small. Samuel and Sara Adams' *The complete servant* (1825) was moderately well known and yet was never reprinted.²⁵ The authors described themselves as servants: the preface tells us that

The author, educated in a foundation school, entered service as a footboy, in 1770, and during fifty years he served successively as groom, footman, valet, butler and house-steward. His wife began the world as a maid of all work, then served as housemaid, laundry-maid, under-cook, housekeeper and lady's maid, and finally, for above twenty years, as housekeeper in a very large establishment.